

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Secretary Gassman Highlights Governor Doyle’s Job Training Initiatives, Salutes Workers Served, Now Employed or Job Ready – During ‘Up North’ Tour, State Labor Secretary visits Rhinelander Job Center



DWD Secretary Gassman (left) greets program participants Rhonda Strzelecki (center) & Traci Dumpprope (right)



Training program participant Scott Rou & Secretary Gassman discuss Scott’s enrollment in the Dislocated Worker Program



DWD Secretary Gassman (center) delivers a message on the value of workforce training programs



(Left to right): Rhonda Strzelecki; Traci Dumpprope; Jennifer Mitchell; FSC Case Manager, Joan Hartmann; & Julie Ison



WIA Dislocated Worker Program participant, Scott Rou poses with his AFL-CIO - LETC Case Manager Dean Schultz



Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) client Heidi Schaefer poses with her DVR Case Manager Don Meeder

9/7/2010—RHINELANDER — Department of Workforce Development (DWD) Secretary Roberta Gassman recently delivered the message that Wisconsin is putting people to work and helping others become job ready, with Governor Doyle's initiatives, American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding, and existing employment and training programs.

"Step by step, we are helping job seekers, the unemployed and underemployed, succeed," Secretary Gassman said. "Challenges remain, but we are encouraged by the spirit and determination of the people we serve. As they find work, stay employed, or learn the latest skills for a new job, we congratulate them. "

As part of Governor Doyle's annual "Up North" Tour, Secretary Gassman visited the Job Center in Rhinelander, where she met people served by DWD and its partner, the North Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Board.

Secretary Gassman cited Governor Doyle's investments in worker training, more than \$10.4 million in the last two years. She also noted more than \$61 million in ARRA funding supplementing existing programs serving dislocated workers, adults, youth and people with disabilities.

Secretary Gassman met with Heidi Schaefer of Rhinelander. After chemotherapy treatments resulted in a hearing loss, Heidi's career as an independent insurance agent was in jeopardy. With the help of DWD's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Heidi received vocational rehabilitation services so she was able to resume her career and maintain her business.

Secretary Gassman met with Rhonda Strzelecki, Julie Ison and Scott Rou. Rhonda Strzelecki, a Manitowish Waters resident who recently earned her nursing degree is now employed as a registered nurse. Previously working in a low-wage, part-time job as a cook, Strzelecki benefited from existing employment and training programs, as well as ARRA-funded assistance to help cover transportation costs to classes.

Julie Ison, a single parent living in Argonne, Wisconsin, was working two part-time jobs and struggling financially. Each month her hours were becoming less and less, and she knew she had to get more training to get a job that offered her benefits and stability. She applied for the Surgical Tech program offered at Nicolet and NTC Technical Colleges. WIA funds helped Julie with tuition and ARRA funds helped with her transportation costs. Completing the program included attending classes in Rhinelander, Wausau, and Minoqua. With WIA and ARRA funds providing her the financial support she needed to stay in school, Julie persevered and graduated in July from the Surgical Tech program.

Scott Rou, was dislocated from a manufacturing job where he was a maintenance worker. Scott enrolled in the WIA Dislocated Worker Program and began attending Nicolet Area Technical College in the summer of 2008. Scott is currently a 3rd semester nursing student and looks forward to becoming a registered nurse.

Individuals meeting with Secretary Gassman also included two recipients of Opportunity Grants, a Governor Doyle initiative to provide up to \$1,000 for technical college tuition to low-wage workers. Jennifer Mitchell of Rhinelander used the grant to complete training at Nicolet Area Technical College to become a registered nurse. Traci Dumphrope, also of Rhinelander, is currently using a grant to complete her education at Nicolet and become a registered nurse.

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NCWWDB: The North Central Wisconsin Workforce Development Board is a public / private partnership between government and business that plans, administers and coordinates Workforce Investment Act (WIA) employment and training programs for adults, youth and dislocated workers in the North Central Wisconsin counties of Adams, Forest, Langlade, Lincoln, Marathon, Oneida, Portage, Vilas, and Wood. Visit NCWWDB at: www.ncwwdb.org.

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